



The Bethel Courier.

Volume I—Number 1

DECEMBER 1976

Bethel Historical Society

SOCIETY MARKS FIRST DECADE

No one seems to know who first conceived of a Bethel historical society, but in 1855 thirty citizens gathered for what was recorded as an antiquarian supper with a desire to preserve the town's history. Various reminiscences were heard, all apparently faithfully recorded in the "Oxford Democrat" by Bethel's most prolific historian, Nathaniel Tuckerman True. Nothing toward the formation of an official organization was attempted, however, at this time or any other until relatively recently. The Bethel Library Association, founded in 1879, seems to have been the repository for many of the printed materials that passed from private hands and retained within the town. Not surprisingly it was the Library Association, probably in response to the local history movement of the twentieth century and with the promise of a substantial gift of antiques, which explored in 1963 the possibility of a historical society or historical museum inside the library building. These plans never developed, however, but several of the library trustees plus other interested citizens were instrumental in founding the Bethel Historical Society at a meeting in the library on May 31, 1966.

Eighteen individuals gathered for that first meeting, all later to be designated the charter members of the organization. As recorded by Eva Bean who became the Secretary and in many ways the most influential member of the new Society, the charter members were: Bryant Bean, Eva Bean, Margaret Carter Bean, Elizabeth Mason Carter, Philip and Mary Chadbourne, Rosalind R. Chapman, Edith H. Eypper, Agnes H. Haines, Floribel Haines, Ralph Hall, Edith K. Howe, Geraldine S. Howe, Bernice H. Noyes, Vance and Janet Richardson, Faye S. Taylor, Nell Valentine. Charles Heywood who did not attend the first meeting was elected President, Nell Valentine, Treasurer.

From the beginning, the Society set definite goals: to raise money, to preserve and interpret the history of the area, and to secure a permanent home. Fund raising was chiefly limited to achieving a mile of pennies in yards (48 cents to a yard), but various other items (buttons from an apple tree allegedly planted by Molly Ockett) were sold and a highly successful antique show was held the first summer of existence. Various papers were heard at meetings initially held in the library but gradually moved to other locations. These included the late Ida Packard speaking on Bethel post offices, Dale Thurston's presentation on the development of dowel and wood turning operations in town, and Florence Thurston's discussion on Hanover's history. Several sites were discussed as possible fut-

ture homes for the Society to house all the materials of Bethel's past that were collected, but until this goal was achieved these were stored in the attic of the Library building. A constitution was adopted the first year and a pamphlet "Molly Ockett" appeared in 1969.

The struggle to survive proved difficult. Membership grew steadily but at times meetings had to be cancelled for lack of attendance. Funds were extremely limited, consequently projects undertaken were of a modest nature. Charles Heywood resigned in October 1968 as president and was succeeded by Dale Thurston. But through it all Eva Bean with the help of several other dedicated members managed to sustain the fledgling Society's life.

With Eva Bean's death in October 1969, the Society lost its more devoted worker and her unparalleled knowledge of local affairs. But others stepped in to fill the void. Mrs. Christine Grover succeeded Miss Bean as Secretary and her husband John T. Grover became president in 1969 serving until 1972 when E. M. Quinn was elected to that position. The main development during these years was interesting Dr. Sidney Davidson, of the William Bingham II Trust for Charity in restoring what was then the Ada Durell house, originally built by Dr. Moses Mason in 1813, as a museum and headquarters for the Bethel Historical Society. Its fine Federal style, Dr. Mason's distinguished career and the outstanding Rufus Porter style murals in the front hall made it an ideal choice.

A thorough and painstaking restoration took nearly two years with members of the society assisting in the process. In 1972 the Dr. Moses Mason House was designated a national historic place in the State of Maine, due largely to the work of Mrs. Elizabeth Mason Carter. Mrs. Carter was also instrumental in two other undertakings of the Society, Homecoming Days held in 1971 and 1972 which created great interest in the town and its past.

During this period of its history, the Society also adopted a new constitution and by-laws placing ultimate authority in a board of seven trustees responsible to the membership. Incorporation took place in 1971.

With the deed to the fully restored Dr. Moses Mason House awarded to the Society by the Bingham Trustees in February 1974, a new chapter in its history began. The museum had to be furnished and the facilities managed by a curator. An urgent call went out to the community for donations of furnishings appropriate to the times of Dr. Mason's life and the response was most gratifying.

Over seventy individuals donated at least one item that could be used in the museum. Stanley Howe, a direct descendant of several of the town's founders and the holder of university degrees in American history, was selected as curator. By the time of the building's dedication on July 10, 1974, the museum was operating and the Society's affairs were being conducted from a central headquarters.

Margaret Joy Tibbetts, recently retired from the State Department, succeeded Barbara Merrill as president in the fall of 1973 and under her leadership the Society began to expand its programs and projects. A twenty-four page special edition of the Bethel Oxford County Citizen in commemoration of the Dr. Moses Mason House and the 200th anniversary of Bethel's settlement was published on the dedication day, July 10, 1974. A booklet "Dr. Moses Mason and His House" also appeared in the spring of that year. The creation of an exhibit of artifacts and photographs around the theme "The Family Farm" as part of the History Outreach Project of the Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums with an accompanying pamphlet marked the first annual Heritage Day in February 1975. The latter event included craft exhibits and demonstrations, historical films and museum tours designed to encourage historical awareness and appreciation. A microfilm project was undertaken with a grant from the Maine Commission for the Arts and Humanities and local history programs were developed for the schools of the area. Two craft courses and one in local history were offered for the first time in the fall of 1975.

In recognition of "an effective program of preservation, publication and education", the Society was awarded a Certificate of Commendation in October 1975 from the American Association for State and Local History. Another significant development was the construction of an archives room, the gift of the William Bingham II Trust for Charity, which was dedicated to Eva Bean on May 6 during the Society's Tenth Anniversary festivities.

Through the summer of 1976, the Society observed the nation's Bicentennial with a series of films and special presentations. A paper was read at the July monthly meeting detailing what is known of Bethel's Revolutionary War veterans. Also opening at this time was an exhibit entitled "Made in Bethel" consisting of photographs and artifacts relating to manufacturing in the municipality from the earliest days to the present with an accompanying booklet. During the town's official celebration, "An Old Fashioned Fourth", the Moses Mason House served as the central headquarters. Hundreds of people participated in the wide range of activities made available ranging from canoe races to scavenger hunts, all culminating in the impressive fireworks display on the Bethel Inn Golf Course.

The Society also hosted the fifteenth annual meeting of the Maine League of Historical Societies and Museums on September 18. Well over one hundred members from Maine's historical societies and museums attended the affair held in the Moses Mason House meeting room, highlighted by a book fair in the Bethel Inn and the luncheon address of Society past president Margaret Joy Tibbetts.

The Society has indeed come a long way in the ten years since 18 interested citizens gathered in the public library. Many dedicated members and friends have worked hard and with the most generous support of the William Bingham II Trust for Charity, the aims of the Society to preserve and interpret the local past seem closer to realization. Much more remains to be done and the Society anticipates even more ambitious programs and projects in the future.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

The publication of this first issue of "The Bethel Courier", a name derived from the newspaper published in Bethel between 1858 and 1861, marks another significant development in the progress of the Bethel Historical Society. While the Society has long publicized its activities, it was felt that a less formal and more diverse means of reaching the membership might be useful and prove beneficial. At present the "Courier" will appear semi-annually (December and June) but if response warrants, it may become a quarterly. In any case, I hope that you, the membership, will feel that this is your publication and not hesitate to make suggestions and comments.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES OF THE SOCIETY, 1976-77

President—John J. Willard, Jr.

Vice President—Catherine Newell

Secretary—Judith Haskell

Treasurer—Margaret Joy Tibbetts

Trustees—Floribel Haines, Donald Eddy, Pearlina McMillin

Building—Donald Eddy, Chairman; E. M. Quinn, Julia Brown, Richard Verville

Garden & Grounds—Sudie Vachon, Chairwoman; Claire Smith, Gertrude Hutchins, Hazel Wheeler, Donald Eddy, Margaret Tibbetts

Education & Research—Randy Bennett, Chairman; Cathy Newell, Rosalind Chapman, Claire Smith, Elizabeth Smith, Virginia Kelly, Judy Haskell, Nancy Morrill, Sue Wight, Kurt Brown

Membership—E. M. Quinn, Chairman; John Willard, Marge Noll, Mary Valentine

Program—Geraldine Howe, Chairwoman; Edith Eypper, Maxine Brown, Helen Morton, Richard Fraser

Museum—Suzanne Fiske, Chairwoman; Floribel Haines, Edith Eddy, Nell Valentine, Rosalind Chapman, Margaret Davis, Judy Haskell, Agnes Haines, Marge Noll

Finance—John Willard, Chairman; Margaret Tibbetts, Pearlina McMillin.

Special Projects—Caroiyn Brooks, Chairwoman; Sarah Stevens, Marguerite Quinn, Elsie Waldron, Pearlina McMillin, Sue Chamberlin

Published semi-annually by the Bethel Historical Society, Stanley R. Howe, Editor. Please address all inquiries and suggestions to Editor, Bethel Historical Society Newsletter, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAM, 1976-77

October 7, 1976—Frank Beard, Historian, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, "Maine's Historic Districts"

November 4, 1976—Libbie Kneeland, West Bethel, "Highlights of West Bethel History"

December 2, 1976—Annual Christmas Program

January 6, 1977—The Blacksmith. Films: "The Pioneer Blacksmith"; "Hammerman at Williamsburg"

February 3, 1977—Film: "Eighteenth Century Life"

March 3, 1977—Film: "The Art of the Conservator"

April 7, 1977—Basil Seguin, Woodstock Emporium, "Maine Books"

May 5, 1977—Mrs. Sally Rand, President, Citizens for Historic Preservation, "The State of Historic Preservation in Maine"

June 2, 1977—Education and Research Committee, Bethel Historical Society, "Highlights of Broad Street History"

July 7, 1977—Benjamin and Natalie Butler, Farmington Historical Society, "The Writing of Local History". This meeting will be held at the East Bethel Church.

August 4, 1977—Homespun. Films: "Pioneer Spinning and Weaving"; "Homespun"

September 1, 1977—Annual Meeting. Pot Luck Supper at 6:30.

All meetings are held in the meeting room of the Moses Mason House unless otherwise noted and will begin promptly at 7:30 p. m.

SOCIETY RESTORATION PROJECT

The Society has received from Mr. and Mrs. Romeo Baker the snow roller used on the Sunday River Road from approximately the turn of the century into the 1920's. Through the generous efforts of Richard Douglass and crew it was moved to the barn of John Head on Vernon Street where restoration efforts will be made. Volunteers and donations of oak lumber are now needed to undertake the reconstruction of a vestige from the area's past.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Lt. General and Mrs. James D. Alger, summer residents of Broad Street, are the Society's newest life members. There are at present 24 in this category among the 173 members of the Society.

PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS

To all Society members and friends:

It is indeed a pleasure and an honor to have been asked to serve as President of the Society for the current term.

All of those familiar with Society affairs know full well the great contributions made to the Society and the Museum by our most recent President, Margaret Joy Tibbetts. Through her leadership and inspiration, the Society and Museum have acquired enduring positions in which the Bethel Community can take great pride. We are fortunate that she continues to serve the Society as Treasurer and Chairperson of the Committee of Trustees.

The Officers give special thanks to the many members and local citizens who have so willingly and enthusiastically volunteered their time to serve as guides and assist with the activities of our Museum and Historical Society.

Courses offered by the Society have been well received and will continue. Suggestions for additional subject matters are always welcome.

The Society now has a busy schedule of activities throughout the year. This Newsletter is an important innovation, and we hope your response will justify its continuation. Commencing next year, we expect to initiate a lecture series to be held during the summer months. Another new project will endeavor to include significant occurrences of 100 years ago which we hope can be included in a "A Century Ago" column appearing weekly in the Bethel Citizen.

Best Wishes for the New Year.

GENEALOGICAL NOTES

Can anyone provide:

Names, birth and death dates of the parents of William Fletcher Kendall.

Date and place of death of Moses Alphonso Hastings, son of Major Gideon.

Date of death of Jonathan Coffin and his wife Jane.

Data on Asa S. Proctor and John Morey of Grafton.

If so please send information to the Society, Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. Also send any inquiries to this address for possible inclusion in a future issue.

Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

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| (1) free admission to the museum | (4) special library and archival privileges |
| (2) special discounts at museum store | (5) semi-annual newsletter |
| (3) preferred rate for meeting room rental | |

To the Membership Committee: I am interested in becoming a member of the Society.

Signature

Please check appropriate category and send your remittance to: Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217

.....Sustaining \$2.50 (Individual)

.....Contributing \$10.00

.....Patron \$25.00

.....Student (under 18 years) \$1.00

.....Life over 55 years \$50.00 single

.....Life over 55 years \$75.00 couple

.....Life under 55 years \$100.00 single

.....Life under 55 years \$150.00 couple

THE GOULD ACADEMY STORY 1836-1976

Francis Parkman

Francis Parkman, a man possessed of considerable wit, intelligence and tact, has produced a competent history of Gould Academy. The book has been conscientiously researched and carefully assembled with full acknowledgement of the author's debt to the late Bethel historian, Miss Eva Bean.

The trials and tribulations of the school throughout its long history stem from crises in finances and in leadership. The sums may vary from the trifling tuition fees and modest subscription lists of the 1830's to the staggering deficits of the 1960's, but the problem remains the same . . . money. Occasionally the only hope for the continuation of the school seems to have been the staying power of a strong headmaster. The Academy almost disappeared from the scene when weak principals and empty coffers coincided.

This book is to be valued for the interesting description of the early days in Bethel, the portraits of Nathaniel True, Frank Hanscom, and Marian True Gehring, the story of the Bingham connection, and the step by step explanation of the changes which led to "going private" in 1968.

Unfortunately the telling of the Gould Academy story also involves long listings of trustees, bequests, real estate considerations, and accounting problems. These may be important matters in the history of the institution, but they will not hold much fascination for the casual reader. Mr. Parkman's treatment of the great schism in the late 1960's does much to clarify a very confusing episode, but the trauma of those months and the crisis of the Scheibler year are told with benign detachment. Only between the lines can one feel a hint of the furor and frustration experienced by the participants.

"The Gould Academy Story" is attractively set with intriguing aerial view end papers and interesting photographs. This history of Gould will be welcomed by friends of the Academy and by historians of Maine.

—Rosalind Sabin Wade

SOCIETY INITIATES HISTORIC MARKER SYSTEM

As part of the Bethel Historical Society's observance of the American Revolution Bicentennial, a historic marker system has been initiated. Bartlett Cemetery on the East Bethel Road was selected as the first site since it is perhaps the oldest cemetery in Bethel, containing numerous graves of Revolutionary War veterans. Records indicate that the first grave may have been dug here as early as 1780, six years after the town was settled. The cemetery, which measures 128 by 180 feet is filled with graves, most of them unmarked, but a few possess crudely cut stones. It has long been neglected and the stone wall which surrounds the plot having fallen into disrepair failed to keep out the cattle in the adjacent field.

Deeply concerned about this situation, the late Eva Bean wrote her local history "East Bethel Road" in 1959 for the purpose of raising money to fence in the cemetery once more, the last such structure having been erected in 1845. Unfortunately, the book never realized enough return in her lifetime to see this goal fulfilled, but she did establish a small fund to maintain the cemetery.

Last summer area high school students employed by the U. S. Forestry Service under the

RECENT AREA PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

"The Gould Academy Story' 1836-1976", by Francis Parkman. Published by the Academy, 226 pp., illus., \$5.50, available from the Academy, Bethel, Me., 04217.

"The History of Rumford, 1826", by Rev. Daniel Gould, Ed. by R. L. Bennett and P. A. McKenna, 1976. 80 pp. illus., footnotes, softbound—\$4.50, hardbound—\$7.00, both incl. tax. 50c extra for handling. Pennycook Press, Box 618, Rumford, 04276.

"Sketches of Oxford County, 1830," by Thomas T. Stone of Andover, reprint, 1976, 112 pp., softbound only, \$4.50, handling 50c. Incl. tax. Pennycook Press.

"Sunday River Sketches," by Martha Fifield Wilkins, Ed. by R. L. Bennett. 1976, approx. 260 pages, softbound, illus., \$12.00 plus 60c Maine sales tax and 75c handling. Androscoggin Publications, 509 Crescent Ave., Rumford, Me. 04276. Available Dec. 1976.

"Town of Rumford 1880 Map," (reprint 1975), \$2. handling 25c from Rumford His. Soc., Mrs. E. Constantine, Box 307, Rumford, 04276.

"Jonathan Adams Bartlett," by Dr. J. Edward Martin (Rumford Publishing Co. 1976), 80 pp., hardcover, \$15.00 incl. tax and handling, from the author, 35 Main St., Mexico, 04257.

"Early History of Dixfield, Maine," by Dixfield Bicentennial Committee (Coburn Farm Press, Dixfield 1976), 92 pp., illus., softbound, \$3.50, handling 50c plus 5% sales tax, from the Committee, Dixfield, Maine, 04224.

"Evolution of a Valley: The Androscoggin Story," by Page Helm Jones. Hardcover, 184 pp., illus., bib., available from Maine Life Bookshelf, Liberty, Maine, 04949 for \$7.95 plus 5% tax for Maine res. and 30c handling.

"The Family Album," assembled by Mark Silber, photographs and info on Buckfield, Maine. 96 9" x 10" pages, 44 photos. \$15.00 from Maine Life Bookshelf. 5% tax and 30c handling extra.

"The Wild River Wilderness," by D. B. Wight, story of Hastings Village and Gilead near Evans Notch, Me. 158 pp., illus., hardcover. From Maine Life Bookshelf, \$6.95 plus tax and handling.

leadership of Donald Feeney as a Civic Action Project with the able assistance of Society member Robert D. Hastings built a fence around the cemetery and trimmed some of the brush. The Forest Service furnished the posts and a portion of the interest from the cemetery fund established by Miss Bean paid for the fencing.

The historic marker will now identify this important historic site. The Society is planning to mark others in the future.

Any suggestions?

BICENTENNIAL TIME CAPSULE TO BE SEALED ON JANUARY 6

A bicentennial time capsule prepared by the Bethel Bicentennial Committee will be sealed for 100 years at the Society meeting on January 6 not to be opened until July 4, 2076. Containing items the Committee deemed appropriate, it will be stored at Society headquarters.



Hon. Moses Mason (1789-1866)

Editor's Note—In October 1975, the portraits of Dr. and Mrs. Moses Mason generously donated to the Society were taken to the Art Conservation Laboratory in Raymond, New Hampshire to be restored and cleaned. When they were returned, the conservator Mrs. Barbara H. Beardsley indicated that she had found a small piece of paper tucked under the canvas of Agnes Straw Mason's portrait which read "Hon. M. Mason. By C. Harding. Boston." In consultation with two art historians, Mrs. Beardsley was convinced that there existed "very little doubt that both paintings were done by Chester Harding a well known American painter."

"WHAT IS THIS HARDING FEVER?": A Brief Sketch of the American Artist Chester Harding by Catherine Newell

Chester Harding (1792-1866) occupies a place in American art that is entirely his own—he is set apart from other portraitists of the first half of the nineteenth century by his unique background. Although he eventually rose to become in one critic's phrase "the only rival to Gilbert Stuart" in the world of portraits, his talents were a result of self-instruction and a desire to improve his art.

He began life as a farm boy in Conway, Massachusetts, moving in his youth to upstate New York. Obtaining little formal education, he gained employment as a laborer and sign painter. Encountering an itinerant artist by the name of Nelson, Harding was immediately attracted to portraiture and journeyed west to Kentucky to join his brother in cabinet making and portrait painting. Within a month of his arrival he had completed one hundred portraits at twenty five dollars each. Later when his work would command a bigger price Harding recorded in his autobiography ("My Egotistography") his Grandfather Smith's reaction to his chosen career: "Chester, I want to speak to you about your present mode of life. I think it is very little better than swindling to charge forty dollars for one of those effigies. Now I want you to give up this course of living, and settle down on a farm, and become a respectable man."

Harding of course did not follow his grandfather's advice, but in a desire for self-improvement that would characterize his entire life, returned east to Philadelphia to study drawing for two months at the Academy of Art making a point to



Agnes Straw Mason (1793-1869)

observe the best paintings and learn from them. He then returned to the west and during this period painted the portrait of Daniel Boone, then in his nineties and quite feeble. Harding sought out the old man, traveling over one hundred miles to do so. This desire to capture the likeness on canvass of the great men of the nation would be with the artist throughout his career.

After a successful sojourn in St. Louis, Harding felt compelled to go abroad to further his training. However, at the urging of his parents, he used funds originally intended for this purpose to purchase some security in the form of a farm in Massachusetts for his wife and growing family. Harding himself went to Washington, D. C., and spent a successful six months there before setting up a studio in Boston in the early 1820's.

At this point Harding experienced a period of tremendous popularity which was described as "Harding fever" by his rival, Gilbert Stuart. This phenomenon, caused primarily by a fascination with Harding's frontier associations, provided him with a frantic half year in which he painted 80 portraits.

Even with a long waiting list still before him, Harding was determined to go to Europe and in August 1823 sailed for England. His journal describes acceptance by fashionable society. Here he painted numerous members of the nobility and was welcomed into their world, his reputation as a frontiersman and ever genial personality serving as assets.

Another aspect of Harding's European travel was his exposure to art collections. He chronicles his reactions to the great masters, recording disappointment in Raphael, Titian, Rubens and Benjamin West but effusive in his favorable reaction to Vandyke, Claude, Hogarth and Rembrandt.

In 1826 economic conditions in the United Kingdom forced his return to the United States. Harding worried about his reception in Boston as he could no longer be regarded as a man from the wilderness west after three years in the company of European nobles. However, between September 1826 and February 1827 he had "painted" to the amount of \$1,400. Many of his former subjects now requested that he alter their portraits to bring fashions up to date. He invariably refused such requests, instead offering to paint a new likeness for one half the current rate of one hundred dollars.

Harding continued to be popular with political figures and in turn fascinated by them. He painted Mrs. Daniel Webster in December 1827 and extracted a promise from her husband to sit after his campaign.

By May 1928, Harding had spent three months in Washington, "a visit of great profit and pleasure." He continued: "I have had the satisfaction of seeing a good deal of the great men of the age, particularly Judge Marshall." A source of great pride to him was that during this visit he painted all of the justices on the Supreme Court.

Harding seems to have continued his yearly stays in Washington and in 1830-31 attended the constitutional convention in Richmond, Virginia for three months, completing eighteen portraits. He appeared fascinated by the debate and seeing such "revolutionary veterans" as Monroe and Madison.

In 1830 Harding moved to Springfield, Massachusetts and his autobiography ends with this transfer. He seems to have continued spending time in Boston and Washington, secure in his reputation. In 1846, he made a second trip to England, following the death of his wife. He summered in the White Mountains of New Hampshire, especially in the Conway area, on one occasion mentioning a journey "up the Saco to elder Crawfords."

Harding's children were divided in sentiment and service during the Civil War and the conflict greatly depressed the artist. In 1864 he spent the winter with children in St. Louis, painting his final work, a portrait of General Sherman. Harding died in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1866, lauded as "the most venerable of American artists."

It is not difficult to criticize some of Harding's portraits. He was unable, despite much effort, to equal the work of Stuart or Copley. His style has been characterized as "matter of fact" as opposed to Copley's "magic." A critic in the British "Blackwoods Magazine" in August 1824 faulted Harding's representation of hands, the amateurish quality of his composition and his "block-like" drapery, although giving the artist credit for recent improvement in the latter.

It is likely that the Mason portraits were done during the 1830's when the Doctor was in Congress. By this time Harding was thoroughly experienced and had the benefit of his time abroad. Although no information regarding the exact date or circumstances of the portraits has come to light it does seem likely that in having their portraits painted by Harding, the Masons were "keeping up" with the Daniel Websters.

BROAD STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPOSED

Broad Street and the Bethel Common area are now receiving serious consideration for nomination as a National Historic District by the Society. The street, containing a diverse range of architectural styles, can be considered a unit of historical significance. Already two buildings within the proposed district are now on the National Register of Historic Places in Maine (Moses Mason House and Gehring Clinic). Other structures of importance include the former homes of William Rogers Chapman, Judge Enoch Foster, William J. Upson, William Bingham II, Major Gideon Hastings, and Judge A. E. Herrick in addition to the Bethel Inn. The public library building was designed by one of Maine's most famous architects, John Calvin Stevens of Portland.

Designation as a historic district in no way affects the rights of individual property owners. It will protect the area from the impact of any federally funded project and make structures eligible for consideration as to restoration funds. Local protection of this historic area might also be considered by the town as part of the comprehensive plan expected to be proposed in 1977.

Extensive historical research of this area must now be done to support the nomination and also to prepare for the Society's annual exhibit which in 1977 will be entitled "Broad Street and the Bethel Common". Anyone possessing photographs, clippings, reminiscences of the past which might prove useful to this endeavor are encouraged to write or call the Society.

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